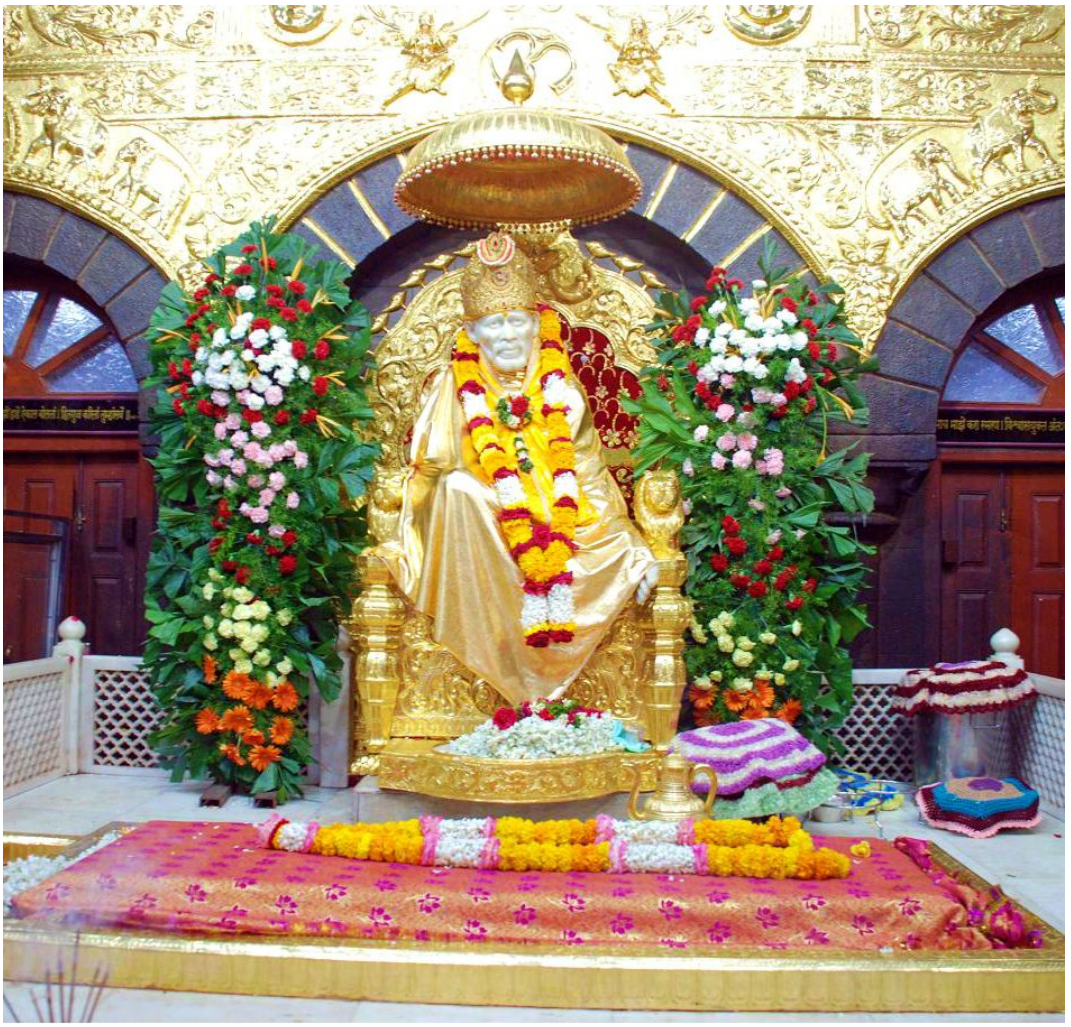
Famous Datta Peethas of India - Part-V

Compiled by : M. Thirumaleshwar

Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, Maharashtra



Ref: Wikipedia

Sai Baba of Shirdi (died 15 October 1918), also known as Shirdi Sai Baba, was an Indian spiritual master who is regarded by his devotees to be a manifestation of Sri Dattaguru and identified as a saint and a fakir.[2] He was revered by both his Hindu and Muslim devotees during, as well as after his lifetime.

According to accounts from his life, he preached the importance of "realization of the self" and criticized "love towards perishable things". His teachings concentrate on a moral code of love, forgiveness, helping others, charity, contentment, inner peace and devotion to the God and guru. He stressed the importance of surrender to the true *Satguru*, who, having trod the path to divine consciousness, will lead the disciple through the jungle of spiritual training.[3]

Sai Baba also condemned distinction based on religion or caste. It remains unclear if he was a Muslim or a Hindu. This, however, was of no consequence to Sai Baba.[4] His teachings combined elements of Hinduism and Islam: he gave the Hindu name *Dwarakamayi* to the mosque in which he lived,[5] practised both Hindu and Muslim rituals, taught using words and figures that drew from both traditions and took samadhi in Shirdi. One of his well-known epigrams, *Allah Malik* (*God is King*) and *Sabka Malik Ek* (*Everyone's Master is One*), is associated with both Hinduism and Islam. He is also known to have said "Look to me, and I shall look to you"[3] and *Allah tera bhala karega*.[6] He was said to be an incarnation of Dattatreya.

Background and events

Sai Baba's date of birth including his birthplace remains unknown. Most information about Shirdi Sai Baba tends to be derived from a book called Shri Sai Satcharitra written by a disciple called Hemadpant (also known as Annasaheb Dabholkar / Govind Raghunath) in 1922 in Marathi.[8] The book itself is a compilation based on accounts by his various disciples and Hemadpant's personal observations of Sai Baba from 1910 onwards.[9]

Information about Sai Baba's origins

There are various beliefs surrounding Sai Baba's place of birth and parents. According to multiple sources, Sai Baba was born in a small village Pathri in Maharashtra to a boatman called Ganga Bhavadia and his wife Devagiriamma.[10] [11] Sai Baba is also claimed to have been born in Tamil Nadu. According to this version, his mother's name was Vaishnavdevi and his father's name was Abdul Sattar. [12] Sri Narasimha Swamy, a devotee of Sai Baba wrote a book Life of Sai Baba.[13] It claims that Sai Baba would make references to Patri in the Nizam State and much later in life told one of his staunch devotees. Many devotees of Sai Baba do not concern themselves with his birthplace or the religion of his family, as Baba actively discouraged such inquiry nor sought to align himself with any region or religion.

According to multiple sources, he was brought up by Fakir in early childhood.[14][15][16] Even from an early age, he was always dispassionate and imbibed the detachment from his foster father, the Fakir. Unfortunately, the fakir too died within 4–5 years of adopting Baba.

Sai Baba at Shirdi

Sai Baba's real name remains unknown. The name *Sai* was given to him by Mahalsapati[a] when he arrived at Shirdi, a town now in the west Indian state of Maharashtra. The word *Sai* refers to a religious mendicant but can also mean *God*.[18] In several Indian and Middle Eastern languages the term *Baba* is an honorific signifying grandfather, father, old man or sir. Thus Sai Baba denotes "holy father", "saintly father" or (venerable) poor old man.[4]

Some of Sai Baba's disciples became famous as spiritual figures and saints, such as Mahalsapati, a priest of the Khandoba temple in Shirdi and Upasni Maharaj. He was revered by other saints as well, such as Saint Bidkar Maharaj, Saint Gagangiri Maharaj, Saint Janakidas Maharaj and Sati Godavari Mataji.[19][20] Sai Baba referred to several saints as 'my brothers', especially the disciples of Swami Samartha of Akkalkot.[20]

Controversy over birth place

In January 2020, Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, announced a ₹ 100 crore (US$14 million) grant for development of facilities at '*Sai Janmsthan*' (transl. birthplace of Sai) at Pathri in Parbhani district. Local people from and around Pathri believe it is the birthplace of Sai Baba. The announcement irked the residents of Shirdi, which is claimed to be the birth place of Sai Baba. After protests, Thackeray decided to remove the mention of Pathri as the birthplace of Sai Baba.[21]

Life

Early years

Sai Baba (seated right), Abdul Baba (seated on the first step), Tatya Kote Patil (seated on the third step with a book in hand), and Nanavali (seated on the left) at Dwarakamai.

Sai Baba with some devotees

Although Sai Baba's origins are unknown, some indications exist that suggest that he was born not far from Shirdi. Baba was notorious for giving vague, misleading and contradictory replies to questions concerning his parentage and origins, brusquely stating the information was unimportant. He reportedly told a close follower, Mahalsapati, that he was born of Deshastha Brahmin[22] parents in the village of Pathri and had been entrusted to the care of a Muslim fakir in his infancy.[23] On another occasion, Baba reportedly said that the fakir's wife had left him in the care of a Hindu guru, Venkusa of Selu, and that he had stayed with Venkusa for 12 years as his disciple.[24]

Baba reportedly arrived at the village of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra, India, when he was about sixteen years old. Although there is no agreement among biographers about the date of this event, it is generally accepted that Baba stayed in Shirdi for three years, disappeared for a year and returned permanently around 1858, just after the Indian Rebellion of 1857. This posits a possible birth year of 1838.[25] He led an ascetic life, sitting motionless under a neem tree and meditating while sitting in an asana. The Sai Satcharita recounts the reaction of the villagers.

> The people of the village were wonder-struck to see such a young lad practicing hard penance, not minding heat or cold. By day he associated with no one, by night he was afraid of nobody.[26]

Some of the religiously-inclined villagers (Mahalsapati, Appa Jogle and Kashinatha) visited him regularly. The village children considered him mad and threw stones at him.[27] After some time he left the village and it is unknown where he went or what happened to him. There are some indications that he met with many saints and fakirs and worked as a weaver; he claimed to have fought with the army of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.[28]

Return to Shirdi

Sai Baba returned to Shirdi in 1858. When he appeared at the Khandoba Mandir in Shirdi, the temple priest, Mahalsapati, welcomed him by saying "Aao, Sai!" ("Come Sai!"). From then on, he was known by the name *Sai Baba*.

Around this time he adopted the practice of dressing in a knee-length one-piece Kafni robe and a cloth cap. Ramgir Bua, a devotee, testified that Sai Baba was dressed like an athlete and sported 'long hair flowing down to the end of his spine' when he arrived in Shirdi, and that he never had his head shaved. It was only after Baba forfeited a wrestling match with one Mohiddin Tamboli that he took up the kafni and cloth cap, articles of typical Sufi clothing.[29] This attire contributed to Baba's identification as a Muslim fakir and was one reason for the initial hostility toward him in a predominantly Hindu village.[30]

For four to five years, Baba lived under a neem tree and often wandered for long periods in the jungle around Shirdi. His manner was said to be withdrawn and uncommunicative as he undertook long periods of meditation.[31] He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated mosque and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for alms and receiving itinerant Hindu or Muslim visitors. In the mosque, he maintained a sacred fire (a dhuni) from which he gave sacred ash ('Udi') to his guests before they left. The ash was believed to have healing and apotropaic powers. He performed the function of a local hakim and treated the sick by application of ashes. Sai Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of the Ramayana and Bhagavat Gita for Hindus and Qur'an for Muslims. He insisted on the indispensability of the unbroken remembrance of God's name (dhikr), and often expressed himself in a cryptic manner with the use of parables, symbols and allegories.[32]

Baba is believed to have tended a garden called Lendi Baug, named after a riverlet called Lendi which flowed nearby.[33] The garden still exists; it contains temples (samadhis) of people and animals associated with Sai Baba's life, and continues to be visited by pilgrims.[34]

In 1910, Sai Baba's fame began to spread in Mumbai.[35][36] Numerous people started visiting him, because they regarded him as a saint with the power of performing miracles or even as an avatar.[37] They built his first temple at Bhivpuri, Karjat.[38]

Final years and death (Samadhi)

In August 1918, Shirdi Sai Baba told some of his devotees that he would soon be "leaving his mortal body".[39] Towards the end of September, he had high fever and stopped eating.[40] As his condition deteriorated, he asked his disciples to recite holy texts to him, although he also continued to meet visitors. He died on 15 October 1918, the same day as that year's Vijayadashami festival.[41][42] His remains were interred at Buti Wada in Shirdi, which later became a place of worship that is known today as Shree Samadhi Mandir or Shirdi Sai Baba Temple.

Teachings and practices

Sai Baba opposed all persecution based on religion or caste. He was an opponent of religious orthodoxy – Christian, Hindu and Muslim.[43]

Sai Baba encouraged his devotees to pray, chant God's name, and read holy scriptures. He told Muslims to study the Qur'an and Hindus to study texts such as the Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita and Yoga Vasistha.[44] He advised his devotees and followers to lead a moral life, help others, love every living being without any discrimination, and develop two important features of character: faith (*Shraddha*) and patience (*Saburi*). He criticised atheism.[45]

In his teachings, Sai Baba emphasised the importance of performing one's duties without attachment to earthly matters and of being content regardless of the situation. In his personal practice, Sai Baba observed worship procedures belonging to Islam; he shunned any kind of regular rituals but allowed the practice of Salah, chanting of Al-Fatiha, and Qur'an readings at Muslim festival times.[46] Occasionally reciting the Al-Fatiha, Baba enjoyed listening to mawlid and qawwali accompanied with the tabla and sarangi twice daily.[47]

Sai Baba interpreted the religious texts of both Islam and Hinduism. He explained the meaning of the Hindu scriptures in the spirit of Advaita Vedanta. His philosophy also had numerous elements of bhakti. The three main Hindu spiritual paths — Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga — influenced his teachings.[48]

Sai Baba encouraged charity and stressed the importance of sharing. He said

> Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Sri Hari (God) will certainly be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting. If anybody wants any money from you and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him like a dog."[49]

Worship and devotees

Main article: Shirdi Sai Baba movement

The Mandir Kalasha Of The Samadhi Mandir, Shirdi

The Shirdi Sai Baba movement began in the 19th century,[50] while he was living in Shirdi. A local Khandoba priest, Mhalsapati Nagre, is believed to have been his first devotee.[51][52] In the 19th century, Sai Baba's followers were only a small group of inhabitants of Shirdi and a few people from other parts of India.[36]

Because of Sai Baba, Shirdi has become a place of importance and is counted among the major Hindu places of pilgrimage.[53][54] The first Sai Baba temple is situated at Kudal, Sindhudurg. This temple was built in 1922. It is believed that Sai Baba gave one rupee to Dada Madye ji with which he built the temple in Kudal.

Today, the Sai Baba Temple in Shirdi is visited by an average of 25,000 pilgrims a day and during religious festivals, this number can reach up to 100,000.[55] The Sai Baba temple in Shirdi is managed by the Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust. Inside the temple, the statue of Sai Baba and the Samadhi are carved out of Italian marble and is seen draped with royal cloth, wearing a gold crown and adorned with fresh flower garlands. The interior is made of old stone bricks. The interior, as well as the exterior (cone) of the temple, is covered with gold. As per rituals and traditions dating back to when Baba was still alive, four Aartis are held daily (corresponding to the time of the day) inside the Samadhi Mandir.

- Kakad Aarti *(The Morning Aarti)* at 4:30 (am)
- Madhyan Aarti *(The Afternoon Aarti)* at 12:00 (pm)
- Dhup Aarti *(The Evening Aarti)* 6:30 (pm)
- Shej Aarti *(The Night Aarti)* at 10:30 (pm)

The Palanquin procession of Sai Baba takes place every Thursday from the Samadhi Mandir to Dwarkamayi, onward to Chavdi and back to the Sai Baba Mandir. Devotees belonging to all faiths are welcome to take Darshan in the Samadhi Mandir and have free meals in the Prasadalaya, irrespective of caste, creed, and religion as these were one of the ideal principles of Sai Baba.

Sai Baba of Shirdi is especially revered and worshiped in the states of Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. In August 2012, an unidentified devotee, for the first time, donated two expensive diamonds valuing ₹ 1.18 crore at the Shirdi temple, as revealed by Saibaba trust officials.[56]

In recent years, the Shirdi Sai movement has spread to the Netherlands, Caribbean and to countries such as the Nepal, Canada, United States, Australia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, United Kingdom,[57][58] Germany, France and Singapore.[59]

Non-discrimination of devotees

Baba himself maintained an ambiguous profile, unwilling to identify with either of the two religions. His Muslim devotees were fully convinced that he belonged to their fold, identifying him as an avaliā. The Hindu bhaktas also viewed him as one of them, since he often identified himself with their gods and customs. Sai Baba wanted to belong to all and be shared by all. When pressed on whether he was Hindu or Muslim, he would often get very angry. Once he told a devotee: "You have been with me for eighteen years now. Does Sai mean for you only these three and a half cubits of height?" Sai Baba was able to avoid clashes between the two communities, and, in fact, succeeded in unifying them in an atmosphere of general harmony. In a verse of the midday arti, devotees sing:

> "In essence or basic principle, there is no difference whatever between Hindu and Muslim. You took birth in human body to point out this. You look with affection on both Hindus and Muslims. This, Sai, who pervades all, as the soul of all, shows."

Baba would often talk about the Hindu gods, quoting from sacred texts or even commenting upon passages of the Bhagavad Gita, the Isha Upanishad, and so forth. The names of Krishna and Rama seem to have been particularly dear to him. With his Muslim followers, Baba would always talk of Allah and the Koran, often quoting Persian verses. One of his favourite expressions was "Allah rakhega vaiia rahena", that is, "Let us be content with what we have, and submit our will to Allah." On several occasions, Sai reassured his listeners by saying that he, like them, was but a devotee of Allah, a humble faqir with two arms and two legs. In later years, Parsis and even a few Christians would come to Shirdi. Sai Baba respected all creeds, true to his conviction that all religions are but particular paths leading to one ineffable goal.[60] His notion of the unity of all mankind that appealed to everyone was very congruous with Sufism of Islam. "God being one and the master of all also meant that all his creatures were part of one big family," writes Sikand. "This belief was entirely in keeping with ... the teachings of Sufis, who believed that the light of God exists in every creature, indeed in every particle of His creation." Sai Baba urged his

Hindu followers to read their holy books and find their own path. For him, all paths were equally valid, "Ishwar" (the Hindu God) and "Allah" being synonymous.

People coming to his abode were so taken aback to see Hindus, Muslims, and others living together so peacefully that in many instances it changed their entire lives and belief systems.[61]

Miracles

Sai Baba's disciples and devotees claim that he performed many miracles such as bilocation, levitation, mind-reading, materialisation, exorcisms, entering a state of Samādhi at will, lighting lamps with water, removing his limbs or intestines and sticking them back to his body (*khandana yoga*), curing the incurably sick, appearing beaten when another was beaten, preventing a mosque from falling down on people, and helping his devotees in other miraculous ways. He also gave Darshan (vision) to people in the form of Sri Rama, Krishna, Vithoba, Shiva and many other gods depending on the faith of devotees.[62][63]

According to his followers, he appeared to them in their dreams and gave them advice. His devotees have documented their experiences.[64]

Followers

Sai Baba left behind no spiritual heirs, appointed no disciples, and did not provide formal initiation (diksha), despite requests. Some of Sai Baba's notable disciples include Mahalsapathi, Madhav Rao (Shama), Nanasaheb Peshway, Bayijabai, Tatya Kote Patil, Kakasaheb Dixit, Radhakrishna Maai, Hemadpant, Bhuti, Das Ganu, Lakshmi Bai, Nanavali, Upasni Maharaj, Abdul Baba, Sapatanekar, Nanasaheb Chandodkar, B.V. Narashima Swamiji.[65] Some disciples of Sai Baba achieved fame as spiritual figures, such as Upasni Maharaj of Sakori. After the demise of Sai Baba, his devotees offered the daily Aarti to Upasni Maharaj when he paid a visit to Shirdi twice within 10 years.[66]

Hindus

During Sai Baba's lifetime, the Hindu saint Anandanath of Yewala declared Sai Baba to be a "spiritual diamond."[67] Another saint, Gangagir, also called him a "jewel."[67] Sri Beedkar Maharaj greatly revered Sai Baba and in 1873, when he met him he bestowed the title Jagad guru upon him.[68][69] Sai Baba was also greatly respected by Vasudevananda Saraswati (known as Tembye Swami).[70] He was also revered by a group of Shaivic yogis, known as the *Nath-Panchayat*.[71] He is considered an avatar of the "Supreme Reality" (Brahman or God), a satguru, or saint, depending on individual proclivities. This is not uncommon in Hinduism where there is no central doctrine or cosmology, but a basis in individual faith and spirituality.

Parsis

Saibaba was revered by prominent Zoroastrians such as Nanabhoy Palkhivala, Farhaad Panthaky and Homi Bhabha, and has been cited as the Zoroastrians' most popular non-Zoroastrian religious figure.[72]

Meher Baba, who was born into a Zoroastrian family, met Sai Baba once, during World War I, in December 1915. This event is considered as the most significant in Meher Baba's life. *Shri Sai Satcharita* (Sai Baba's life story), makes no mention of Meher Baba but Lord Meher, the life story of Meher Baba, there are numerous references to Sai Baba.[66]

Meher Baba, who claimed he was an (the) Avatar, credited his Avataric advent to Upasni, Sai Baba, and three other Perfect Masters: Hazrat Babajan, Hazrat Tajuddin Baba, and Narayan Maharaj. He declared Sai Baba to be a *Qutub-e-Irshad* (the highest of the five Qutubs, a "Master of the Universe" in the spiritual hierarchy).[73] This classification of avatar and satgurus and the associated name is applied within the Meher Baba community alone.

In popular culture

Shri Sai tends to be a very common name for establishments in Mumbai in particular and Maharashtra in general. It tends to be popular for a variety of establishments including restaurants, real estate agencies and hotels.

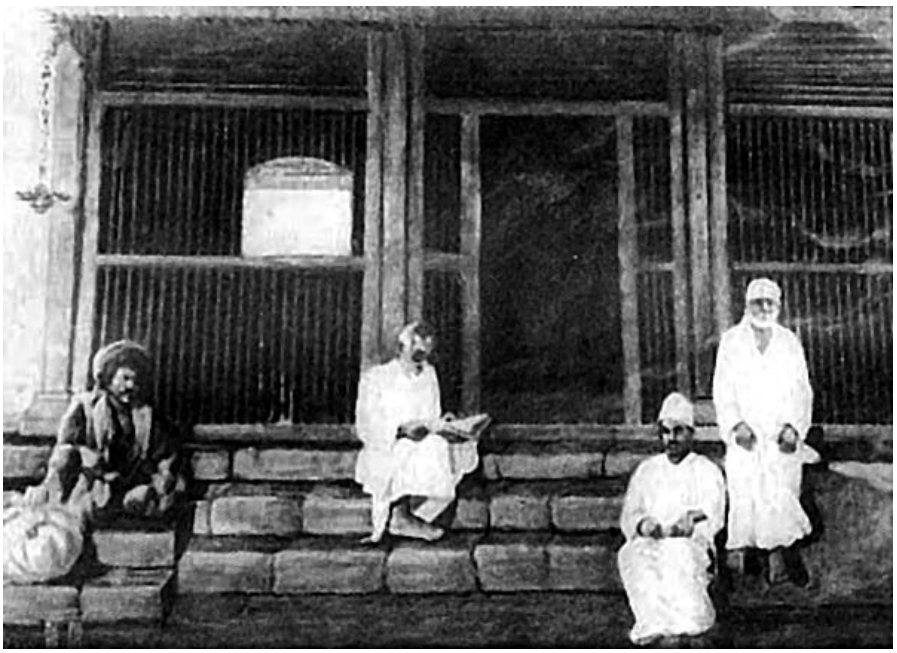
Sacred art and architecture

There are many temples of Sai Baba in India.[74] Temples are also located in countries outside India, including the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa, Netherlands, Kenya, Benin, Cuba, Canada, Pakistan, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and New Zealand.[75] Present in the mosque in Shirdi in which Sai Baba lived, is a life-size portrait of him by Shama Rao Jaykar, an artist from Mumbai. Numerous monuments and statues depicting Sai Baba which serve a religious function have been made. One of them, made of marble by a sculptor named Balaji Vasant Talim, is in the Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi where Sai Baba was buried.[76]

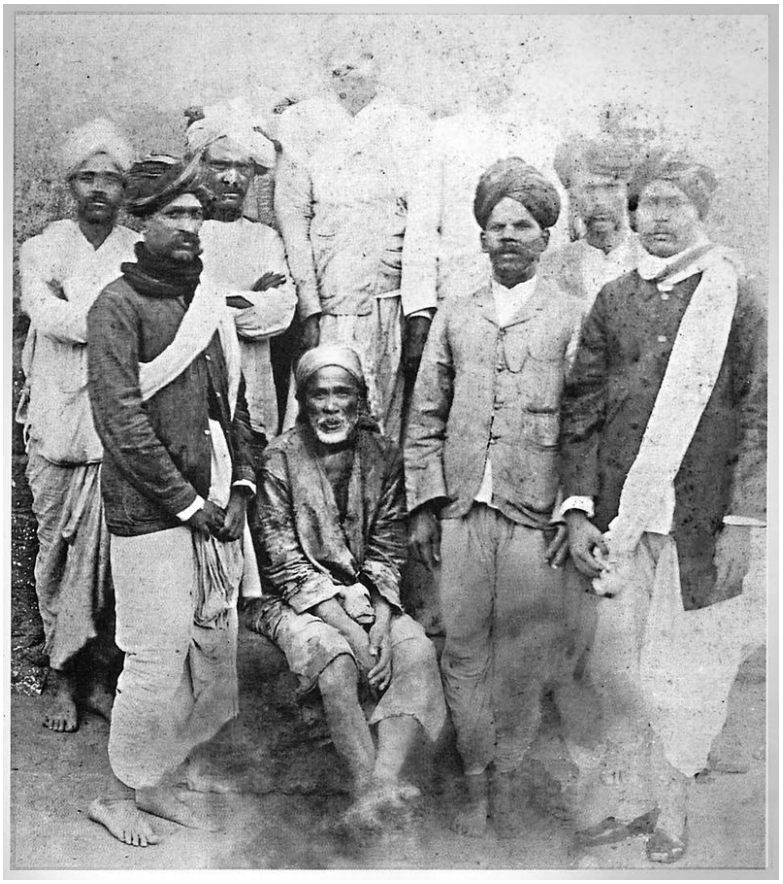
In 2008, India Post has issued a commemorative postage stamp of ₹ 5.00 to honour Sai Baba.

Photos:

Sai Baba



In Dwarakamayi



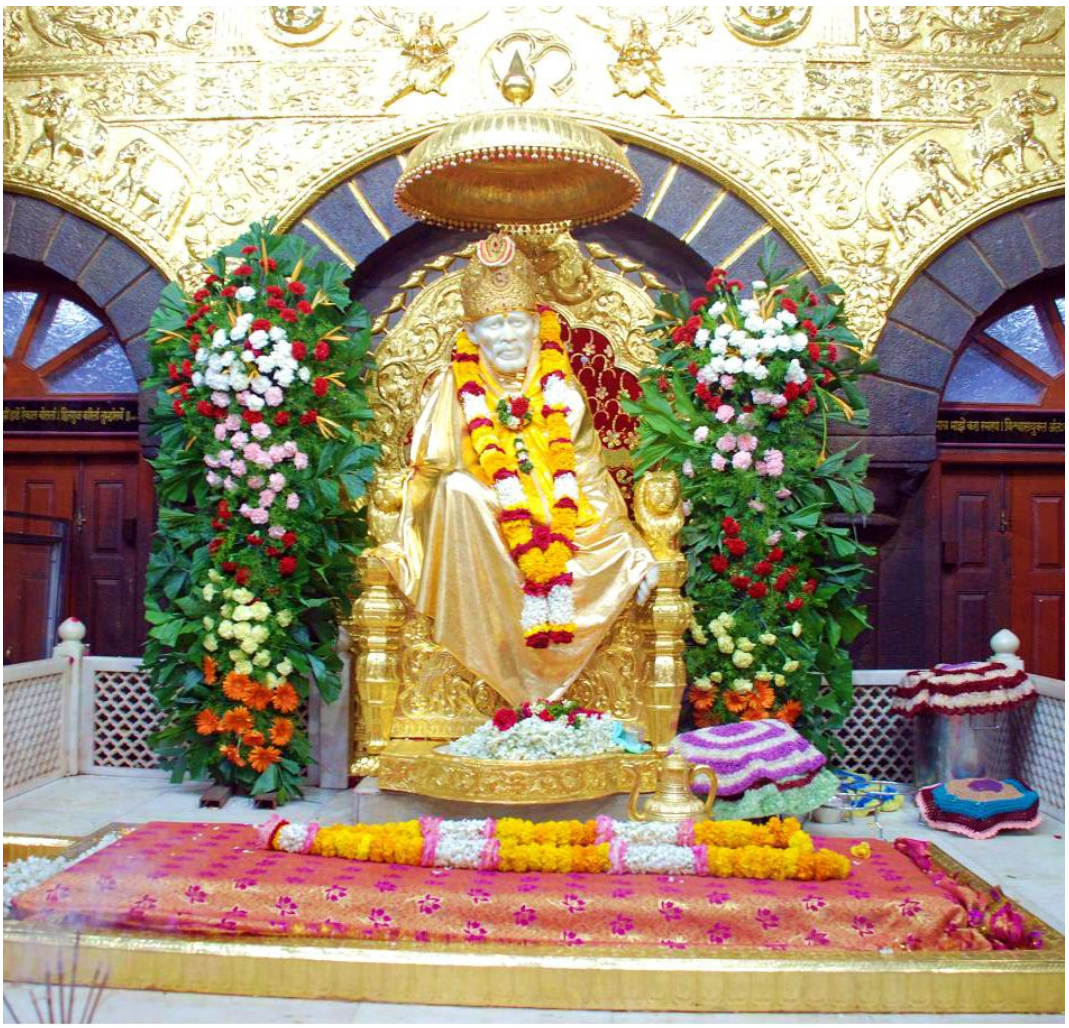
With some devotees

Baba in His usual attire

Padukas of Sai Baba

Baba leaning against wall of Dwarakamayi

Marble statue of Baba



Baba

Ref: Sai.org.in

Shri Saibabasansthan Trust, Shirdi

About the Trust:

Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi, is the Governing and Administrative body of the Shri Saibaba's Samadhi Temple and all others temples on this premise, and devoted towards development of Shirdi village.

Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi, is the authorized body to control and manage the day-to-day activities at the Shri Saibaba Samadhi Temple. It also provides various facilities like Accommodation, Meals (Free), refreshments, and lot more. The Sansthan Trust also runs School and Colleges(Junior and Senior), English Medium School from class Jr KG to Std X, Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Drinking Water Supply, Hospitals (Shri Saibaba Superspecility Hospital and Shri Sainath Hospital on Charity basis).

Shirdi, a small rural town in the Rahata Taluka of Ahmednagar district in the Maharashtra state of India. Shirdi is a secular place where all religions are treated as one & a belief in the power of Faith & Patience is foremost. A place where all heads bow down in prayer, where faith prevails, where hopes are built, where patience pays, and where infinite joy and everlasting contentment abound. Such is the glory of the place which belongs to the Holy Saint, a true repository of wisdom, who pleased all with pious equality and gifted mankind ornaments of humanity and peace by saying "SABKA MALIK EK". The footprints of Saibaba have made this town a holy place. Millions of devotees continuously flock here from all over India and abroad. Situated on the Ahmednagar-Manmad highway.

Shirdi can be reached from the new railway station at Sainagar; Manmad-Junction, Kopargaon and Nagarsul are other nearby railway stations on the Central Railway. Shirdi is where the holy soul of Shri Satchidanand Sadguru Sainath Maharaj - affectionately known as “Saibaba” rests today. Shri Saibaba appeared at Shirdi in his human incarnation. For 60 years Baba served mankind and preached his precious teachings to the world from here, and then went for contemplation (Samadhi) in Shirdi itself. The footprints and the deeds of Saibaba have turned this small town into a unique holy place for people of all castes, creeds and religions. Saibaba delivered the universal slogan of "Shraddha - Saburi", i.e. Faith and Patience for everyone,

from here itself. The place of his 'Samadhi' has become a center-point for innumerable devotees, infusing them with the joy of life. While visiting Shirdi, one experiences complete peace of mind, a strong self-confidence, and a great sense of purpose. During his contemplation (Samadhi) services, Shri Saibaba had consoled his devotees with these words - "After I take Samadhi, my bones will speak from the grave, and people will throng here." His message is being experienced till today. Shirdi is a convenient place to visit throughout the year, during all seasons. Baba's Shirdi is one place where even today all his devotees come with empty hands, but filled with Hope**,** and go back "Blessed with Contentment with an Everlasting Smile on their faces".

Photos:

DWARAVATI
BHAKTANIWAS

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New photos:

Original samadhi mandir

New samadhi mandir

Sai Baba at Samadhi mandir

Lord Ganesha's idol which was presented by Baba to Shyama

Abdul Baba’s chimta

Sai Baba's Khadau (slippers)

Dwarka Mai

New fountain at Landhi bagh

Chawri procession

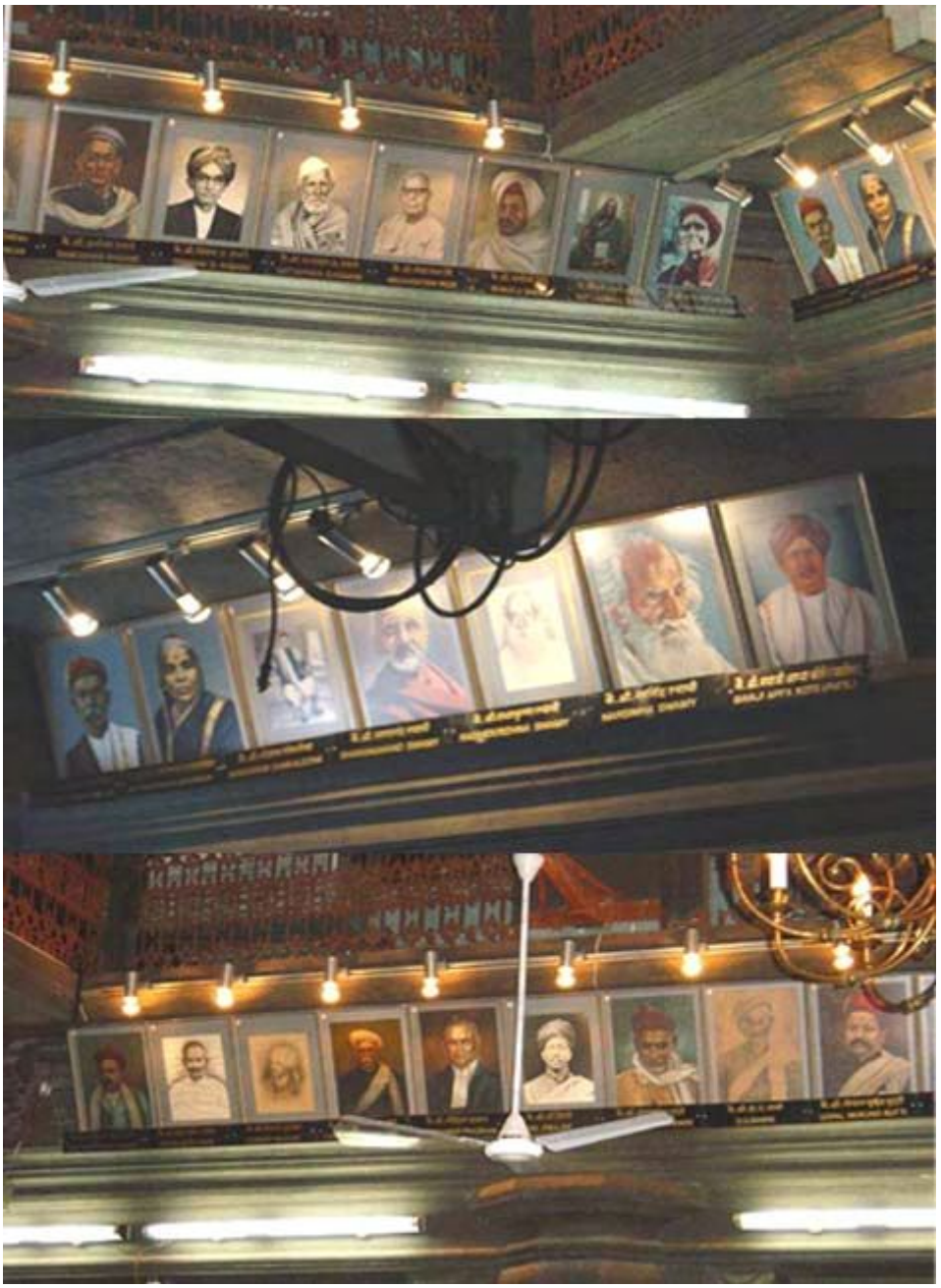
Chawri photo

Baba’s Abhishek Aarti

Statue of Bhagat Mahalspiti in the Khandoba Temple

Sai in Dwarka Mai

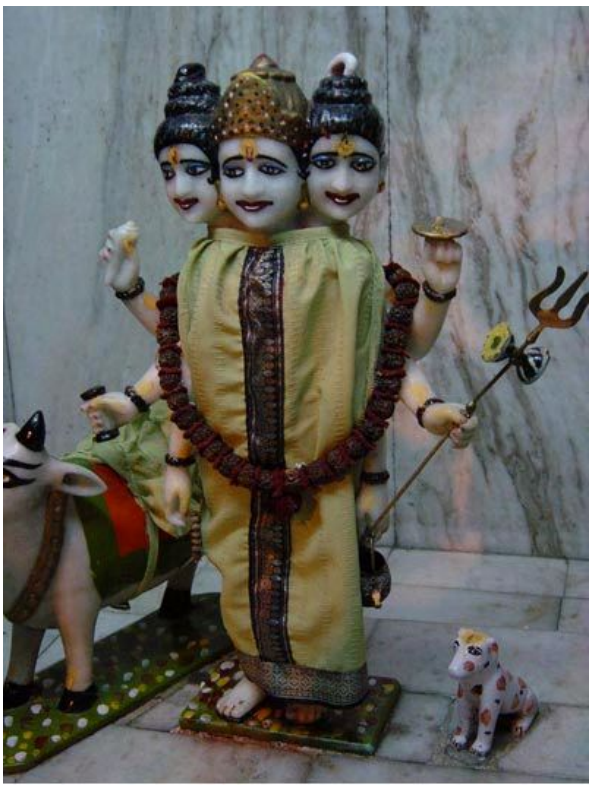
Original Things used by Shri Sai Baba, also seen in the picture Muralitharan statue which had to be placed at the Samadhi Mandir



People who were in contact with Baba Ji, while he was living

Statue of Sri Sai Baba

Padukas



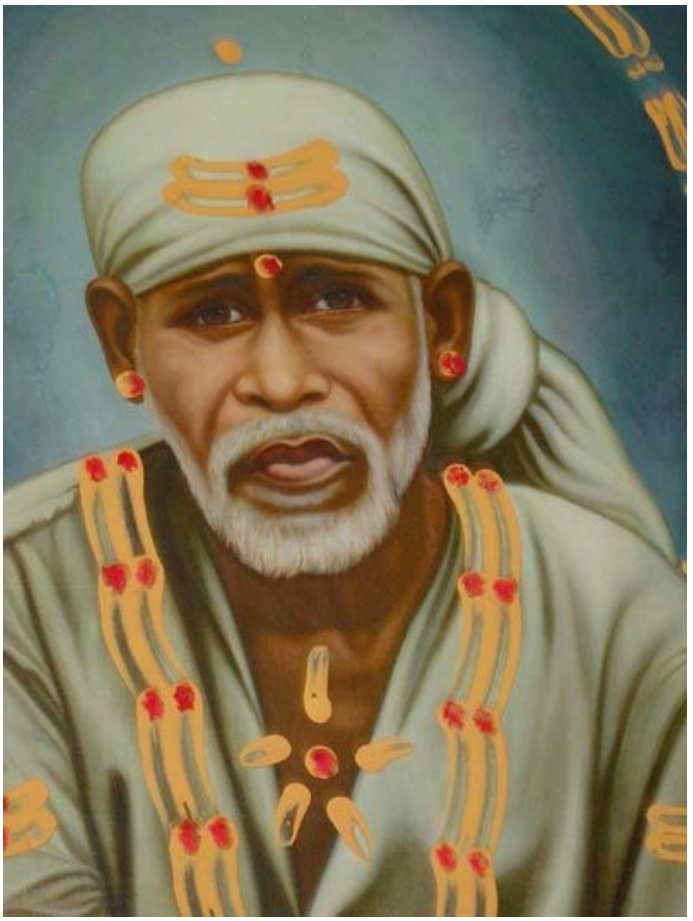
Statue of Shri Dattetrey near Nandadeep in Shirdi

Sai Baba statue in Gurusthan

Shri Sai Baba photo in the visitor room in the Samadhi Temple

Shri Sai Baba photo in Guruasthan

Shri Sai Baba painting in Chawri



Shri Sai Baba painting in Chawri

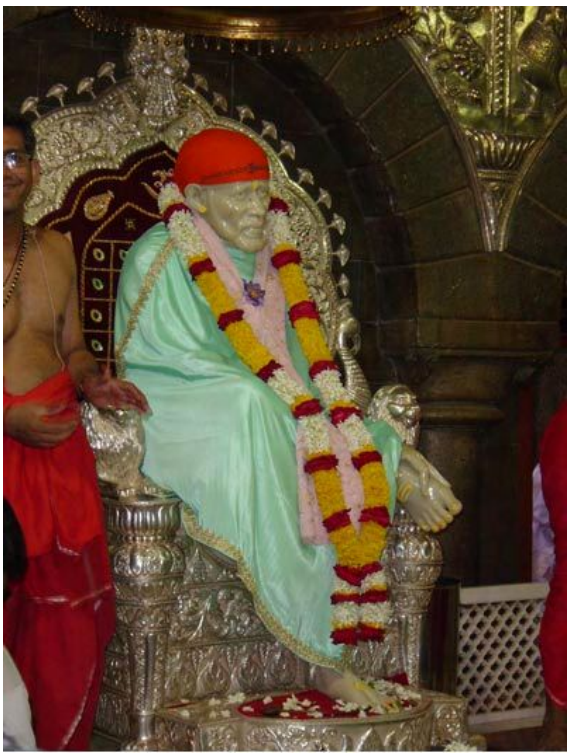
Shri Sai Baba painting in Chawri

Shri Sai Baba's bed

Shri Sai Baba's chair

Shri Sai Baba's photo in Chawri

Shri Sai Baba's photo



Shri Sai Baba's statue

Shri Sai Baba's samadhi

Who is Sai Baba of Shirdi

Long time ago, at the beginning of eighteenth century a young bearded man with sparkling eyes took shelter in a mosque, in Shirdi Village (of Maharshtra State, In India) . Nobody knew from where this stranger had come who hardly spoke a word and stayed there.

Gradually the curious villagers started offering food to the man, but he never asked anything from them. Sometimes he shared his food with the animals. Soon the young fakir, as he was started to be addressed, started expressing his view points with few elderly villagers. His simple language of expresssion and his special power of solving the problems of poor needy and destitutes soon made this less known fakir, known as Shri Sai Baba. As the days passed, devotees started streaming into Shirdi in ever growing numbers. The village was fast becoming a centre of pilgrimage. As gifts and presentations flowed in, the pomp and ceremony of Sai worship were evolving. Everyday Sai Baba would be a pauper having distributed all among the needy and the poor. But Sai Baba's life of a Fakir remained calm, undisturbed, unaltered and therein is the saint's Spiritual glory.

People also realised that this "Baba" was no ordinary person but a person with extraordinary godly powers. Such powers are not known or present in normal human beings. Baba preached his principle of love and faith in humanity to all his disciples. He always felt anguished over the fact that all those who came to him were more for their own personal problems and not for attaining the ultimate goal of reaching God which he felt could be attained only by true servicing of humanity.

Sai baba strongly believed in uniformity of religion and he never distinguished anyone on the basis of caste, creed or religion. He always made it a point not to return empty handed those who had come to him in their hour of need and grief. He performed miracles to alleviate the suffering of poor people. On one occasion he restored the eyes of a blind elderly and in another occasion he lighted a lantern with water when there was no oil to burn it.

As all good things have to end ultimately "Baba" also left his body on his own will on 15th Oct. 1918, leaving his millions of believers and followers crying. His body was laid in the Samadhi Mandir called "Booty", which he had asked his disciple to built before his death.

Sai Baba was Unique, in that, he lived his message through the Essence of his Being. His life and relationship with the common man was his teaching. The Immense Energy that was manifest in the body of Sai was moving and is still moving in a mysterious way, creating and recreating itself everywhere, beyond the comprehension of time and space.Yet, he lived with the common folk as a penniless fakir, wearing a torn kafni, sleeping over a mat while resting his head on a brick, begging for his food. He radiated a mysterious smile and a deep inward look, of a peace that passeth all understanding. He was always and ever aware of what transpired within the hearts and minds of everyone, whether they be, His devotees or not. This Omnipresent and Omniscient Sri Sai Baba who left his mortal body in 1918, is the living spiritual force that is drawing people from all walks of life, from all parts of the world, into his fold, today.Sri Sai Baba lived, acted and behaved as only a "God descended on Earth" can. He came to serve mankind, to free them from the clutches of fear.

His most concise message for one and all alike was "Why fear when I am here". To take refuge in Sai, is to enter into ajourney to reach the Divine Oasis of Love and drink deep from the Fountain of Life, the source of all Spiritual Energy.Wherever the devotee is, Baba makes him recognize within himself his highest aspirations and goal and at one stroke, his conduct and the attitude to fellow beings is touched with the awareness of love, understanding, patience and faith. This is the promise that Sri Sai Baba holds out to all who come to Him. Sri Sai Baba was beyond the limitations of Time and Space and thus caste, creed, position dogmas and doctrines were fundamentally unimportant to him. Nobody really knew his parentage, where he came from or which religion he practised. He claimed no possessions nor accepted any disciples or gave any specific teaching.

This anonymity lent a strange facet to his interaction with the people who came to him for guidance. To the Hindus he was an orthodox Brahmin, with a sacred fire, enjoining the worship of many gods and the devout study of various Hindu scriptures. He lived in a mosque but always referred to it as "Dwarkamay!" (Lord Krishna's birth place is Dwaraka). To the Moslems he was a fakir living in a mosque observing the disciplines of Islam, uttering "Allah Malik" (God is the master) guiding Muslim seekers along the lines c)f their own religion. To the Parsis he was the

sacred rire worshipper. His life was a living manifestation c)f the Sermon of the Christ and of the Eight-fold path of the Buddha.

Sai Baba's attraction and appeal lie in this fact that he was a perfect model of the harmony of all religions, for whom this world - with all its sectarian and religious antagonism, had been waiting. Sai Baba lived to awaken and lead mankind to the varities of spiritual life. He set in motion a wave of spirituality, which is now spreading all over the globe. All his life's activities constituted the upliftment of mankind. By first conferring temporal benefits, he drew unto himself countless souls caught up in ignorance (darkness) and opened their eyes to the true meaning of life. The miracles which manifested through Sai Baba were just such as were needed to create faith in the people and to make his devotees ethically and spiritually better evolved. Baba did not purposefully perform miracles to show his powers. The very strength of his perfect realisation, in its interaction with nature, caused "the miracle" to take place. Thus he drew people from their deluded pursuits after earthly objects of a transitory nature and induced and inspired them to strive for self-realisation. He continued this glorious work until the last moment of his human embodiment in Shirdi.

Amazingly, there are a phenomenally large number of Instances in which Sai Baba has been literally physically appearing before his devotees, even decades after his passing out of the physical body.Sai Baba is constantly and simultaneously proving that he Is alive in spirit and responds to our sincere prayers. He Is the One Spirit of all existence. which is God in all the forms of God, in all the saints, in all the men and in all the creatures.All those who sincerely take to a life of inner development, Sai Baba lifts him to a higher level. Every one derives benefit according to the ripeness o f his soul and in accordance with his inner yearning.Baba assured his devotees by his saying **"I am at Shirdi and everywhere. Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind, that I am always aware of everything"**. Sai Baba does not belong to any single tradition but to all mankind on the path of goodness, love and understanding.

The relevance of Sai Baba today

The divine role of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi in the present embodiment covered a period of about 64 years between 1854, when He made his first appearance in Shirdi, and 1918 when he left His body. However, his sixty years of stay at Shirdi on his second appearance between 1858 and 1918 manifested the depth and expansiveness of his unique role.India was in a cross - road of cultural and religious mix. The Mughal empire was vanishing and the British empire was establishing itself. Western culture and Christianity were slowly entering into the mainstream of Indian life. Religious and cultural intolerance were raising their ugly heads in the Post Sepoy-Mutiny Scenario of India. It could not have been possible for any leader or statesman to bring about harrnony among the divergent religious, cultural groups in such a situation. It was only a God in human form who could dare and accomplish the task of bringing unity between the different religious and social groups.Shri Sai baba had large number of Hindu, Parsee and Muslim devotees. Christians and Sikhs also used to visit Him.

All were treated by him alike. Under his umbrella, both the Hindus and Muslims happily took part in each others religious festivals. The caste scheme of the Hindus had no relevance with Shri Sai. He had introduced the tradition of group worship, group prayer and group dinning for all and would share his 'Chilum' (Tobacco pipe) with all. He even showed highest compassion for animals and birds and encouraged

his devotees to feed and take care of them. He recognised no difference in temporal status of human beings. He refused to accept food brought in silver and gold utensils from a queen but relished a single ROTI (hand-made bread) of a beggar woman and showered all His blessings.

- He practiced and preached humanism and universal brotherhood - prophet like.

- He established the superiority of love and compassion above egoism - Christ-like.

- He taught simplicity of livelihood and excellence of human virtue reflected in day to day conduct, Buddha-like.

Today, the world is looking ahead for a magical solution to its problems of cultural, racial, national and religious differentiation. All intellectual exercises to bring about peace in -the world and happiness to mankind has failed for these efforts are not based on humanism, universalism and love as taught by Shri Sai. The ever multiplying number of Sai temples and devotees of Shri Shirdi Sai Baba in India and other countries establishes the ever- increasing relevance of His Preachings today. Jesus as an human embodiment is gone but the spirit of Jesus remains. The body of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi cannot be seen but the magnetic pull of His Divine Soul is felt by all those who merely think of Him and particularly, those who visit His tomb at Shirdi. Baba had promised that whosoever would put his feet pn the soil of Shirdi, his miseries would end or marginalise.

All devotees of Baba find His promise come true, even eighty years after He left the mortal body. Baba used to call His devotees as children, and like the true father, kept busy day-in and day-out for their temporal as well as spiritual upliftment. In todays world the children of God, torn asunder by religious, social and sectarian strife, should run to the father to experience that love which can only unite them.Human beings may conquer all the planets and stars before they learn the magic formula to conquer the hearts of their fellow beings. The formula has been given by the Master. It is for us to follow to make the world a better place to live.

Miracles of Sai Baba:

The villagers of Shirdi and afar soon found out that this was no ordinary fakir but an avatar (incarnation) of a very high order. He demonstrated through his miracles and utterances, the purpose and intention for which he had come. He would often say, "My Leela is inscrutable". To each one he met, he imparted knowledge according to the capacity of the recipient to absorb it. Baba's Leela's (miracles) were plenty and varied, and we recount just a few which occurred during and after his lifetime.

Lighting lamps with water

Long before Sai Baba's fame spread, he was fond of burning lights in his Masjid and other Temples. But for the oil needed in those little earthenware lights that he lit, he depended on the generosity of the grocers of Shirdi. He had made it a rule to light earthenware lamps in the masjid every evening and he would call on the grocers for small donations. But there came a time when the grocers got tired of giving oil free to Sai Baba and one day they bluntly refused to oblige him, saying they had no fresh stocks. Without a word of protest Sai Baba returned to the masjid. Into those earthenwa lamps he poured water and lighted the wicks. The lamps continued to burn deep into the midnight. The matter came to the notice of the grocers who now came to Sai Baba with profuse apologies. Wouldn't Sai Baba kindly pardon them? Sai Baba pardoned them, but he warned them never to lie again. "You could have refused to give me the oil, but did you have to say that you didn't have fresh stocks?" he admonished them. But he had made his point.

Premonition of burning fields

Once, harvesting in Shirdi had been completed and the foodgrains of the entire village had been stored in a yard. The summer was on. The heat was intense as only those who have lived in Shirdi know. One afternoon Sai Baba summoned Kondaji Sutar and said to him: "Go, your field is on flrel" Frightened, Kondaji ran to his field and. frantically looked around for any sign of fire. There wasn't any. He returned to the masjid and informed Sai Baba that he had looked everywhere but had found no trace of fire and why did Baba have to frighten him? Unfazed, Baba said : "You better turn back and look again." Baba was right after all. Kondaji noticed that a sheaf of corn was indeed on fire and smoke was billowing from it. A strong wind was fanning the fire and word had gone round to the villagers who now came running to the

scene. "Sai Baba," the people shouted "help us, help us put the fire out!" Thereupon, Sai Baba walked casually towards the yard, sprinkled some water on a stack of sheaves and said: " There now! The fire will die down!" And so it happened.

Stopping the rain

There is the story of one Rao Bahadur Moreshwar Fradhan who had come to Shirdi to take Sai Baba's darshan along with his wife. As the couple were about to leave, it began to rain heavily. Thunder and lightning rent the air. As the Pradhan couple looked round in dismay, Sai Baba prayed. "Oh Allah!" he intoned, "let the rains cease. My children are going home. Let them go peacefully!" The storm thereupon ceased, the downpour reduced to slight drizzle and the Pradhans were able to reach their destination safely.

Raising the water level in well

When Sai Baba first came to Shirdi it had of no basic facilities. There was a well put only in name. It had no natural spring water and if ever there had been one, it must long ago have dried up. Water had to be fetched from a distance. When, therefore, Sai Baba gave his permission to the villagers to celebrate the Ram Navami Fair, (Baba's Birthday) the big problem facing the organizers was one of water supply. So What should they do but go to Sai Baba with their problem? "'Oh yes," said Sai Baba, 'so you want plenty of water, do you? Here, take this and drop it in the well and wait and see." "'This," turned up to be a platter of flowers on which some prasad (blessed food) had been placed along with the remnants of alms Baba had received earlier in the day. The villagers had no qualms about doing as they were did. Their faith in Sai Baba was total. No sooner had that platter of leaves been dropped in the well, it is said, water rose from the bottom as if by divine command and completely filled it. And great was the rejoicing of the people.

Saving a child from drowning

One report has it that word had spread that the 3-year old daughter of a poor man called Babu Kirwandikar had fallen into the well and had been drowned. When the villagers rushed to the well they saw the child suspended in mid-air as if some invisible hand was holding her up! She was quickly pulled out. Sai Baba was fond of

that child who was often heard to say : I am Baba's sister!" After this incident, the villagers took her at her word. "it is all Baba's Leela", the people would say philosophically. They could offer no other explanation.

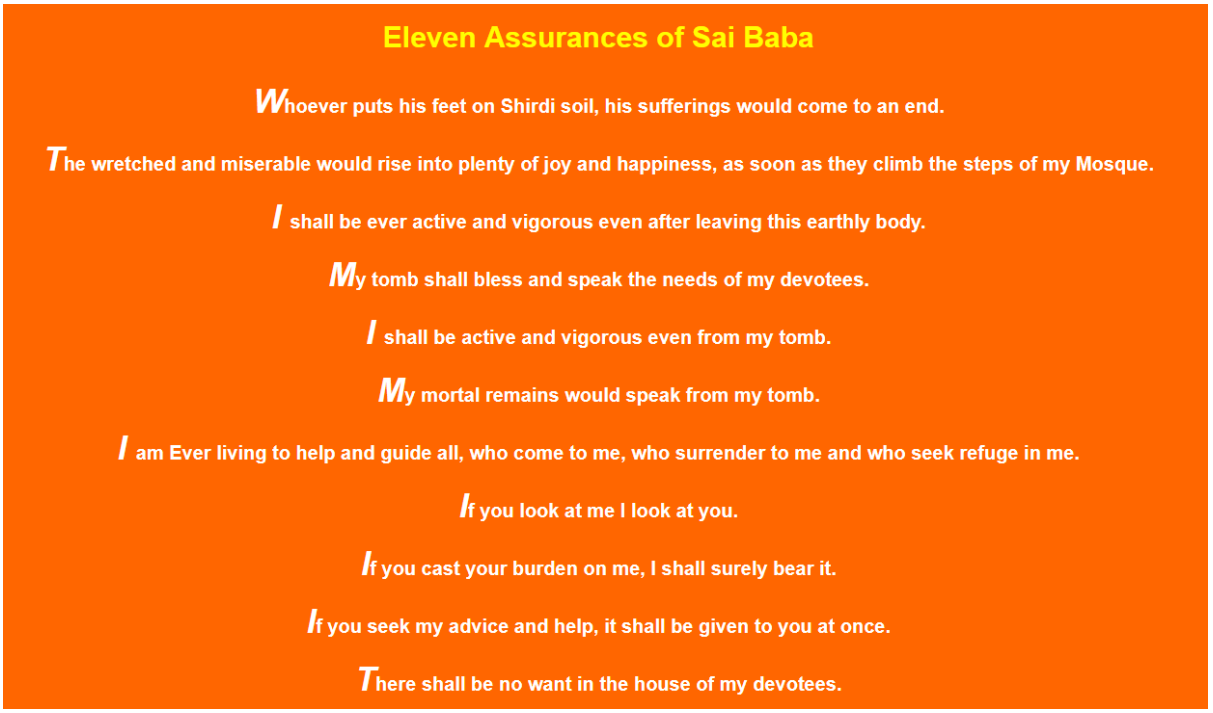
Flow of Godavari (river) from Baba's feet

These were instances of things they had seen with their own eyes. It was not secondhand information they had gathered. Sai Baba was to them as real as their homes and their fields and their cattle and the distant hills.Das Ganu once had an unforgettable experience. On a festive occasion, he sought Baba's permission to go to a place called Singba on the banks of the Godavari to have a bath in the holy waters. "No," Baba replied resolutely, "where is the need to go all the way when the Godavari is here right at my feet?" Das Ganu was vexed. He was willing to concede that Ganga the holy river (Baba frequently referred to Godavari as Ganga) rose from the feet of Sri Narayana (one among the Hindu trinity of Gods) himself, but his faith was not deep enough to believe that the waters of the Godavari could spring form the feet of his master, Sri Sai. Baba who was reading Das Ganu's mind decided that this was the time to strengthen Das Ganu's faith. He told his devotee: "come closer to me and hold the hollow of your palms at my feet!". As soon as he did so water flowed freely out of the toes of the master's feet and filled the hollow of Das Ganu's palms in no time. His joy knew no limits. He sprinkled the water on his head and his body and distributed some more among the assembled devotees as tirtha (holy water).

Other miracles

There was that other occasion when many thought that the masjid which housed Sai Baba itself would be consumed by fire from the flames which leapt up from the dhuni. All that Baba did was to take some swipes at a wooden pillar in front of him. With every blow the flames subsided and the fire died down. "Miraculous," said his devotees. Often they would notice him stirring some hot concotion over the kitchen fire, not with a ladle but with his bare hands. There never was a time when his hand was scalded. What supernatural powers did he have? On yet another occasion, Sai Baba was partaking of food with three of his devotees in the masjid when, without any cause for provocation, he exclaimed- "Stop!" Then, as if nothing had happened,

the four continued with their meal. Lunch over and the dishes cleared, they stepped out of the masjid, when large chunks of the ceiling fell on the very spot where they had been seated only a few minutes earlier. Did Sai Baba's powers extend even to inanimate matter, the devotees wondered. Instances have been quoted by his devotees as to how Sai Baba commanded the rains to stop and the winds to cease.


Eleven Assurances of Sai Baba
Whoever puts his feet on Shirdi soil, his sufferings would come to an end.
The wretched and miserable would rise into plenty of joy and happiness, as soon as they climb the steps of my Mosque.
I shall be ever active and vigorous even after leaving this earthly body.
My tomb shall bless and speak the needs of my devotees.
I shall be active and vigorous even from my tomb.
My mortal remains would speak from my tomb.
I am Ever living to help and guide all, who come to me, who surrender to me and who seek refuge in me.
If you look at me I look at you.
If you cast your burden on me, I shall surely bear it.
If you seek my advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.
There shall be no want in the house of my devotees.

Ref: templepurohit.com

Shirdi Sai Baba lived between 1838 and 1918, whose real name, birthplace and date of birth are not known. A spiritual guru and a fakir who transcended the barriers of religions, Shirdi Sai Baba was regarded with great reverence by both Hindu and Muslim followers.

His philosophy ingrained ‘Shraddha’ meaning faith and ‘Saburi’ meaning compassion. According to him Shraddha and Saburi were the supreme attributes to reach the state of godliness.

It is believed that at a tender age of 16 yrs Shri Sai Baba arrived at the village of Shirdi in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra and remained their till his death. He

found shelter in Khandoba temple, where a villager Mahalsapathi in the temple addressed him as Sai or Saint.

Baba reportedly arrived at the village of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, India, when he was about sixteen years old. Although there is no agreement among biographers about the date of this event, it is generally accepted that Baba stayed in Shirdi for three years, disappeared for a year and returned permanently around 1858, which posits a possible birth year of 1838. He led an ascetic life, sitting motionless under a neem tree and meditating while sitting in an asana.

The people of the village were wonder-struck to see such a young lad practicing hard penance, not minding heat or cold. By day he associated with no one, by night he was afraid of nobody.

His presence attracted the curiosity of the villagers and the religiously-inclined such as Mhalsapati, Appa Jogle and Kashinatha regularly visited him, while others such as the village children considered him mad and threw stones at him.After some time he left the village, and it is unknown where he stayed at that time or what happened to him. However, there are some indications that he met with many saints and fakirs.

Shirdi Sai Baba lived an extremely simple and austere life, sleeping on the floor of temple and later taking a ruined mosque as his shelter. With his arrival to Shirdi, in no time he began exhibiting a hypnotic attraction among people as they began flocking to him. There are many accounts of Sai Baba miracles, doing things that were beyond a mortal’s power. He never discouraged these attributes and soon his fame spread like wild fire. Many pilgrims came seeking his blessings. Such was his hypnotism that even the mundane of his activities attracted large crowds.

Shirdi Sai Baba - A Saint, Fakir and Satguru

For four to five years Baba lived under a neem tree, and often wandered for long periods in the jungle in and around Shirdi. His manner was said to be withdrawn and uncommunicative as he undertook long periods of meditation. He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated mosque and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for alms and receiving itinerant Hindu or Muslim

visitors. In the mosque he maintained a sacred fire which is referred to as a dhuni, from which he had the custom of giving sacred ash (‘Udhi’) to his guests before they left and which was believed to have healing powers and protection from dangerous situations. At first he performed the function of a local hakim and treated the sick by application of Udhi. Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of sacred Hindu texts along with the Qur’an, especially insisting on the indispensability of the unbroken remembrance of God’s name (dhikr, japa). He often expressed himself in a cryptic manner with the use of parables, symbols and allegories. He participated in religious festivals and was also in the habit of preparing food for his visitors, which he distributed to them as prasad.

Sai baba strongly believed in uniformity of religion and he never distinguished anyone on the basis of caste, creed or religion. He always made it a point not to return empty handed those who had come to him in their hour of need and grief. Sai Baba performed many miracles to alleviate the suffering of poor people. On one occasion he restored the eyes of a blind elderly and in another occasion he lighted a lantern with water when there was no oil to burn it.

Popular among both Hindus and Muslims, Shri Sai Baba became a great building force between the two disparate communities. He regularly recited Hindu and Muslim prayers. His Hindu followers considered him to be an avatar or reincarnation of Shiva and Dattatreya. Sai Baba did not leave any written works. All his teachings were oral and catchy. His sayings were short, crisp and in layman language with which the common mass could easily associate.

Sai Baba’s origin is completely unknown to this day. He did not disclose to anyone where he was born nor where he grew up. Because of his unknown past, various communities have claimed that he belongs to them. Nothing has been substantiated, however. It is known that he spent considerable period with fakirs. His attire resembled that of a Muslim fakir.

Sai Baba encouraged charity and said, “Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect.”

Shirdi Sai Baba - A Saint, Fakir and Satguru

Shri Shirdi Sai Baba was unique in the sense that he lived his message through the essence of his being. He lived among the common people adorning a torn kafni (long robe), sleeping over a mat while using brick as his headrest and got his food by begging. Such was his smile that radiated a mystical charisma and deep seated inward look that hypnotized the people who visited him.

His most concise message for one and all alike was **“Why fear when I am here”.**

Sai Baba said that he was a slave in the service of those who loved him. He was ever living to help those who turn to him and that he has to take care of his children day and night.

Eleven famous sayings of Shirdi Sai Baba:

No harm shall befall him who sets his foot on the soil of Shirdi.

He who cometh to My Samadhi, his sorrow and suffering shall cease.

Though I be no more in flesh and blood, I shall ever protect My devotees.

Trust in Me and your prayer shall be answered.

Know that My Spirit is immortal. Know this for yourself.

Show unto Me he who sought refuge and been turned away.

In whatever faith men worship Me, even so do I render to them.

Not in vain is My Promise that I shall ever lighten your burden.

Knock, and the door shall open. Ask and ye shall be granted.

To him who surrenders unto Me totally I shall be ever indebted.

Blessed is he who has become one with Me.

Sai Baba’s mission was to restore belief in god and according to him, “I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them

(knowledge of the Ultimate).” He then taught values of total surrender to the Almighty Master and experiences his grace.

Samadhi Mandir - Shirdi Sai baba

Sai Baba attained ‘mahasamadhi’ on October 15, 1918. Before his death, he said, “Do not think I am dead and gone. You will hear me from my Samadhi and I shall guide you.” The millions of devotees who keep his image in their homes, and the thousands who throng to Shridi every year, is a testimony to the greatness and continuing popularity of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Amazingly, there are a phenomenally large number of Instances in which Sai Baba has been literally physically appearing before his devotees, even decades after his passing out of the physical body.Sai Baba is constantly and simultaneously proving that he Is alive in spirit and responds to our sincere prayers. He Is the One Spirit of all existence. which is God in all the forms of God, in all the saints, in all the men and in all the creatures.All those who sincerely take to a life of inner development, Sai Baba lifts him to a higher level. Every one derives benefit according to the ripeness o f his soul and in accordance with his inner yearning. Baba assured his devotees by his saying “I am at Shirdi and everywhere. Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind, that I am always aware of everything”. Sai Baba does not belong to any single tradition but to all mankind on the path of goodness, love and understanding.

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Today, Shri Sai Baba has millions of devotees in India and abroad. Shirdi, the obscure village in Maharashtra has become a pilgrimage destination much as Bethlehem, Jerusalem or Varanasi. With over 25,000 pilgrims thronging in here each day the number of pilgrims climb to over a hundred thousand on holidays and festival days. There are over 2,000 major Sai temples in different parts of India and 150 abroad in places as far-flung as Canada and Kenya, Singapore and England.

Festivals and pooja:

Temple Pooja Daily Schedule

Time	Programme
4:00 AM	Temple open
4.15 AM	Bhupali
4:30 AM – 05:00 AM	**Kakad Aarti (morning)**
5:00 AM	Bhajan in Saibaba Mandir
5.05 AM	Holy Bath of Shri Sai Baba (Mangal Snaan) in Samadhi Mandir
5:35 AM	Aarti ***"Shirdi Majhe Pandharpur"***
5:40 AM	Darshan begins in Samadhi Mandir
11:30 AM	Dhuni Pooja with rice and ghee in Dwarkamai
12:00 PM- 12:30PM	**Mid dav Aarti**

&

4:00 PM	Pothi (Devotional reading/Study) in Samadhi Mandir
At Sunset (20 min.)	**Dhoop Aarti**
8:30 – 10:00 PM	Devotional Songs in Samadhi Mandir and other Cultural Programmes (if any)
9:00 PM	Chavadi and Gurusthan closes
9:30 PM	In Dwarkamai water is offered to Baba, a mosquito net is hung and the hanging lamp is lit
9:45 PM	Dwarkamai (the upper part) closes
10:30 PM-10:50 PM	**Shej (night) Aarti,** after this , a shawl is wrapped around the statue in the Samadhi Mandir, a Rudraksha mala is put around baba's neck, Mosquito net is hung, and a glass of water kept there
11:15 PM	Samadhi Mandir closes after night Arati

How to reach?

Shirdi is a famous centre of pilgrimage and can be reached from several important cities of Western and Southern India. Also known as the Land of Sai, Shirdi is very well connected to the rest of the country and only recently got its own railway station in March 2009 which is named Sainagar Shirdi.

If you want to make a travel to this place you can choose any of the following options:

By Road

Shirdi can be reached by taking a Bus from almost all major cities of Maharashtra. Shirdi is on the Ahmednagar-Manmad Highway, 250 km from Mumbai and 75 km from Nashik.

By Air

Nearest airports are Nashik (5km) Mumbai (260 km), Pune (185 km), and Aurangabad (125 km). Flights for all the major cities in India and abroad can be taken from Mumbai.

By Train

Kopergaon on Daund-Manmad Line is an important railway station about 16kms from Shirdi. This station is on the route of the Karnataka Express from New Delhi to Bangalore. Manmad is another important station about 58kms from Shirdi which carries a number trains from Mumbai and Delhi.

Ref: tripadvisor.in

Photos:

SHREE SAIBABA MANDIR COMPLEX
श्री साईबाबा समाधी मंदिर परिसर

श्री साईबाबा समाधी शताब्दी महोत्सवानिमित्त
श्री साईबाबा संस्थान विश्वस्तव्यवस्था, शिर्डी
व साईधाम फाऊंडेशन, मुंबई आपले आभारी आहे.

दर्शन रांगेकडे
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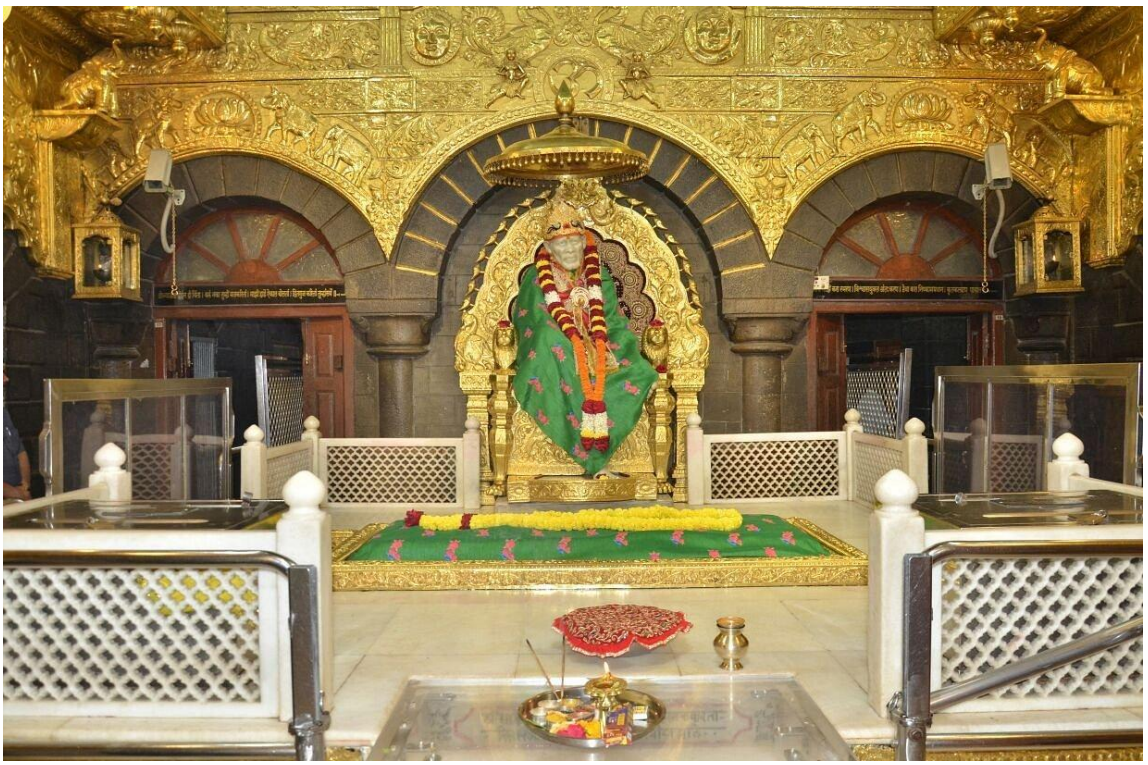
2
श्री साईबाबा संस्थान विश्वस्तव्यवस्था, शिर्डी
Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi
VIP Darshan Pass is available at Sansthan's PRO Office,
Sai Ashram Bhaktaniwas, New Bhaktaniwas (500 Rooms) and
Dwarvati Bhaktaniwas between 6 am to 9 pm at a Donation
Fee of Rs.200/- per person without any recommendation.

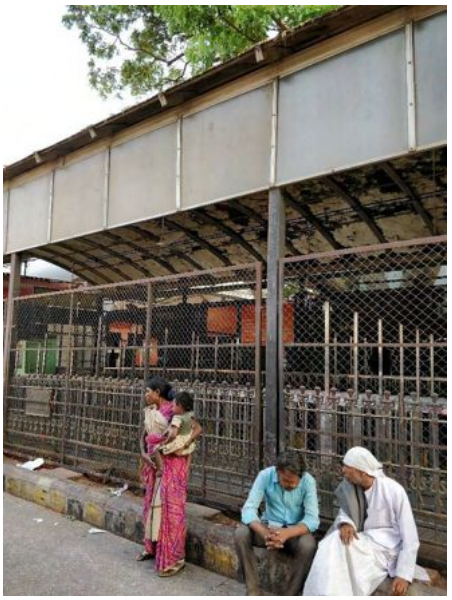
श्री कृष्णा
शोडा शिकंजी



श्री साईबाबा समाधी मंदिर
GSTIN:-27AAATS2581C1ZN

VRINDAVAN
BAR
HOTEL SHWETA
BAR & RESTO

SHREE SAIBABA MANDIR COMPLEX
MAHALAXMI
TOURS & TRAVELS



Quotes:

Love one another and help others to rise to the higher levels, simply by pouring out love. Love is infectious and the greatest healing energy.

The life ahead can only be glorious if you learn to live in total harmony with the Lord.

You must pass your days in song. Let your whole life be a song.

Man seeks to change the foods available in nature to suit his tastes, thereby putting an end to the very essence of life contained in them.

Life is a song - sing it. Life is a game - play it. Life is a challenge - meet it. Life is a dream - realize it. Life is a sacrifice - offer it. Life is love - enjoy it.

Videos:

Quotes:

https://youtu.be/xpL6S-NJVzA

Assurances:

https://youtu.be/CA9d6l-oUe4

PM Narendra Modi visits Shirdi:

https://youtu.be/QSs8CaIxpMg

Shirdi Sai Baba Aarti:

https://youtu.be/B_Qw-RZTJgs

Untold stories of Sai Baba:

https://youtu.be/663rL6bpO2c

Top 10 Sai Baba songs:

https://youtu.be/hI6UITxbprg

Top 10 Sai Baba bhajans:

https://youtu.be/hYUlFggWwgk

Sai Baba Kakad Aarti:

https://youtu.be/7ecGB9BlpY0

Shirdiwale Sai Baba ...full songs:

https://youtu.be/jGtB-B_xdxo

Top 79 Sai bhajans:

https://youtu.be/3z-lYBWgA7k

Sai Sahasranam:

https://youtu.be/-My82tfPKPo

Shirdi Sai Baba -- full movie:

https://youtu.be/_W7LQPYygW0

Ref:

https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2017/09/sri-sathya-sai-on-shirdi-sai-baba.html#.YQbU6nZX7kw

Sri Sathya Sai On: Shirdi Sai Baba (Parentage, Birth and Early Life)

The Avataric Journey: Sri Krishna, Shirdi Sai Baba and Sri Sathya Sai

Parentage and Birth

In the former Nizam's dominion, in Aurangabad district, there was a remote village called Pathri. In that village, there lived a couple by name Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma. They were aggrieved because they did not have any children. In answer to their prayers, a son was born to Devagiriamma on September 28, 1835. That child was Sai Baba.

On account of the passage of time and circumstances, no one knew the exact dates of Baba's birth and passing. In this context, the mystery relating to Baba's birth should be noted.

Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma hailed from Pathri village, and they were ardent worshippers of Eshwara and Parvati. They had no offspring for a long time. They intensified their prayers. Gangabhavadya used to ply a boat near the village for living. One night, when it was raining heavily, Gangabhavadya left his house to take care of the boat, informing his wife that he would not return that night. After her husband had left, Devagiriamma had her food and went to bed early. At 9 p.m., there was a knock at the door. Devagiriamma opened the door expecting the likely return of her husband. Instead, a very elderly man entered the house. He pleaded, "It is very cold outside. Please permit me, mother, to stay inside". Being a pious woman, Devagiriamma allowed him to stay in the veranda and went inside the house after bolting the inner door.

A little while later, there was a knock on the inner door. She opened the door. The old man said, "I am feeling hungry, give me some food". Finding that there was no food, the woman mixed some flour with curds and gave it to him. There was again another knock after some time. When she opened the door, the old man said, "My legs are aching. Mother, will you massage them?" Devagiriamma went inside, sat in the prayer room and prayed, "Oh Mother! Why are you testing me like this? What should I do? Should I serve him or refuse?"

Going out of the house by the back-door she went in search of someone who could be engaged to render this service. No one was available. As she returned there was another knock from the old man. At the same time, a woman knocked at the backdoor. The woman asked, "It appears you came to my house and sought some feminine help. I was away at that time. Please let me know what service I should render". Feeling happy that Goddess Parvati Herself had sent the woman in response to her prayers, Devagiriamma sent the newcomer to the veranda for serving the old man and closed the door.

The old man and the new woman were none other than Parameshwara and Parvati the Divine couple. Parameshwara told Parvati, “Fulfil the cherished desire of this lady”. Parvati replied, “You are the Supreme one. Please shower Your grace on her Yourself”. Eshwara said, “I came to test her. You came in answer to her prayers. Hence You must bless her”. They knocked the door once again. This time Devagiriamma promptly opened the door, because the presence of another woman emboldened her. Parvati and Parameshwara appeared before her in their Divine forms. Unable to contain her joy, Devagiriamma fell at their feet.

Parvati then blessed her, “I grant you a son to maintain the lineage and a daughter for Kanyadana (a girl to be offered in marriage)”. Then Devagiriamma fell at the feet of Eshwara. Eshwara said, “I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I shall take birth as your third child”. When Devagiriamma got up, the Divine couple was not there. Feeling ecstatic over this experience, Devagiriamma eagerly awaited the return of her husband in the morning to relate to him the whole experience.

The husband returned in the morning. She related to him all that had happened the previous night. The husband said, “Devagiri! What is this entirely fanciful tale! It is all a dream. Parvati and Parameshwara appearing before you and giving Darshan! It is pure fantasy!” Gangabhavadya dismissed the whole episode as incredible and fanciful.

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But, as time passed, Devagiriamma became enceinte and a son was born. A year later a daughter was born. Gangabhavadya was convinced that the birth of the two children was the result of the blessings conferred by Parvati and Parameshwara He told his wife, “You had the good fortune of having the Darshan of Parvati and Parameshwara. I did not have that luck”. When Devagiriamma conceived again, Gangabhavadya began to feel an urge to give up hearth and home and go in search of the Divine Couple. He told his wife that he was leaving for the forest to do penance. Devoted wife that she was, Devagiriamma decided to follow him though she was in the ninth month of her pregnancy. After following her husband for some distance, she developed labour pains. She delivered a boy. Wrapping the baby in a piece of cloth, she left the child by the roadside and followed her husband.

- “Revelations about the Sai Avatar”, Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 23, September 28, 1990, Prasanthi Nilayam

Early Life

In that village there was a Patel whose wife had gone to her native village for a festival. This Patel was bringing back his wife in a horse coach. The Patel had a lot of money and therefore he got the horse coach. They also didn’t have children. When they reached that place she heard a baby cry. She saw that this boy was on a piece of Sari and the boy was playing and crying. Drops of honey were falling from the tree in the mouth of the child. She came and called her husband and said that the baby’s body was smeared with blood.

They did not know as to who had left him there. They looked around and nobody was seen. Patel's wife thought that God had himself presented her this boy. She took the boy home. No one asked them who the child was. They were very happy thinking that God had given this child to them.

A Shaligrama venerated as
Embodiment of Lord Vishnu

The boy grew up. When Baba was a boy he used to play marbles. He was so good in the marble game that from a distance he could hit any marble. And all the boys who played with Baba would lose their game. And generally the people who lose get angry. These people insisted that Baba should play again as they wanted to win a game. But this boy did not have any marbles left. He went to the worship room. There, there was a Shaligrama (a venerable stone) worshipped by his mother every day. It also looks like a marble. He brought the marble and played with it. Baba thought, "Ah this very good, I would like to win it!" He hit the marble and won the marble. He took the marble. But the rich man's son said, "You should give back this marble to me". Baba swallowed it. The boy kept crying and fighting with Baba. The mother saw what was happening. She came down and asked why the two of them were fighting. She asked the boy, "Why are you fighting with that boy? What did He do?" The boy replied that Baba had swallowed his marble. The mother chastised the boy saying that she didn't give him money and enquired how he got the marble. The boy replied, "I did not have any marbles so I went into the worship room and got the Shaligrama". With great devotion she was worshipping this Shaligrama every day. When she went and saw the worship room, the Shaligrama had vanished from there. She was very angry. She prayed to Baba, "Boy, give me back the Shaligrama. I will give you how much ever money you want". He said, "How much ever you plead; I am not going to give you". She got very angry and slapped on both the cheeks of Baba. She then asked Him to open His mouth. Just as Yashoda had seen the 14 worlds in the mouth of Lord Krishna, this lady had the same vision. She was very blissful and touched the feet of Baba and cried.

At the age of seven, the boy used to go to the Hindu temple and read the Quran, and in the mosque he used to chant Vedas. In those times the hatred between the Hindus and Muslims was too much. The Hindus and Muslims started complaining against this boy. The Muslims said, “You come to our mosque and chant Vedas!” The Hindus complained, “You come to our temple and read the Quran!” The Hindus and Muslims boycotted this boy from their places of worship. How much ever the boy was told, he still wouldn’t understand. Even the father tried but he still did not pay heed. The mother wanted to send the boy somewhere. She was thinking of that. Someone came and suggested that the boy should be sent to the Ashram of Venkusa.

She took the boy to that Ashram. Gopal Rao Deshmukh was called Venkusa by the people on account of his scholarship and wisdom. From inside Venkusdas came outside and said, “Boy, I have been waiting for you for the past 10 years”. He hugged this boy and took him to the Ashram. Then Venkusdas went to the mother and said, “Amma from now on he is my son. I will look after him properly. You can go home peacefully”. She was very happy thinking that this was the end of her troubles. She said, “Now and then I will come and see my boy”. Then Venkusdas answered, “If you want to see him now and then, it’s alright. If you want you can even stay here”. But she went away. From that day Venkusdas showed immense love for that boy. The boy stayed in Venkusa’s Ashram till 1851. Venkusa was extremely fond of the boy. In every matter, he used to give priority to this boy’s views. When he was eating food, he used to make this boy sit by his side and eat. He would make the boy sleep in his room. He taught him all the Vedas, Shastras (scriptures) and the epics.

In the school, other children were jealous of this boy. This jealousy is a curse in this age of Kali. Generally, if someone is subject to showering of love, others will develop jealousy and feel that this boy has come only recently and why is he being given so much love. This is jealousy. This jealousy crossed all the limits. One day Venkusdas was taking this boy to the forest. He sat under a tree and was teaching the boy all Vedanta. Other jealous boys threw stones at this boy from a distance. One stone hit the boy’s forehead. It started bleeding. Venkusdas tore a piece of his a dhoti and tied a piece as a bandage on the boy’s head. That piece of cloth which was tied around His head was not removed by Sai Baba till the end.

Thereafter, one night (in 1851), the boy left the Ashram. He reached Shirdi - a very small village at that time.

- “Then at Shirdi, now at Parthi”, My Dear Students Volume 03, March 16, 1998, Brindavan

Venkusdas (also referred to as Venkusa) tied the cloth on Baba's head, which He retained for the rest of His physical sojourn

Source: Sai Vani: Avatar on Avatar Purushas